UNITED NATIONS

A E

General Assembly

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/137
E/1991/40
25 April 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session
Item 95 of the preliminary list*
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

First regular session of 1991
Item 6 of the provisional agenda**
WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION

Work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 5	2
II.	HISTORY, CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL INDICATORS	6 - 12	3
III.	INDICATORS ON SOCIAL SECTORS AND POPULATION SUBGROUPS	13 - 24	5
IV.	MODEL-BASED SYSTEMS OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL INDICATORS	25 - 32	9
V.	COMPOSITE INDEXES	33 - 36	11
VI.	CONCLUSIONS	37 - 38	12

* A/46/50.

** E/1991/30.

I. INTRODUCITON

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/72, entitled "World social situation". In that resolution, the Council requested the Secretary General to submit a report to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on "the work being done within the United Nations system to improve and further develop quantitative and qualitative indicators that measure accurately the social condition and the standards of living of the world's population, particularly in developing countries". That request arose from the Council's desire that the analysis and dissemination of data on the world social situation be increased and more broadly diffused. The Council also requested that the next report on the world social situation include an analysis of the main indicators of social progress and standards of living, and of the trends in those indicators.

2. The resolution reflects the wide interest nationally and internationally in improving and further refining social indicators. Much of this interest has to do with the gathering of information and monitoring of progress in areas of priority concern to Governments and the international community, such as human resources development, the eradication of poverty, the social costs of structural adjustment and the monitoring of international activities and events corresponding to the socio-economic mandates and objectives adopted by intergovernmental bodies. Because aggregate economic indicators provide limited information on social conditions, attention has mainly been focused on developing, expanding and improving sets of social indicators relevant to policy analysis in areas of socio-economic concern. This demand for new and more refined social indicators has also been fueled by advances in microcomputer-based information-processing technologies, which have speeded up the processing and analysis of data and generated further prospects for using social indicators in information and decision-making.

3. The preparation of the present report draws on the findings and conclusions of the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission, held from 4 to 13 February 1991. Among additional sources, the report also takes into account relevant preliminary findings and background information from (a) the Human Development Report 1991, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and (b) preparations for the Meeting of Experts on Social Development Indicators, sponsored and organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Ministry of Planning of Morocco, and held at Rabat from 8 to 11 April 1991. 1/

4. The report is concerned primarily with social indicators (as opposed to economic, physical or functional indicators) and examines the various ways in which social indicators have been developed in the United Nations system and their uses, with emphasis on recent years. For convenience, the indicator approaches used in the report are classified as follows: series of key domain indicators; multisectoral sets of indicators; model-based systems of integrated social indicators; and composite indexes. The first two approaches

consist basically of operational, input-oriented indicators corresponding to the kinds of physical or objective criteria suitable for measuring changes in living standards. The other two approaches, by virtue of fitting into explicit models on the one hand and comprising aggregated measures in the other, are more output-oriented and thus are better suited for measuring general changes in social conditions. The first two approaches, moreover, are attuned mainly to programme management and decision-making requirements, while the latter two contribute for the most part to the realms of social knowledge and policy analysis, and only indirectly to operational decisions. In practice, all four approaches have made extensive use of quantitative, that is, objective indicators in measuring both quantitative and qualitative phenomena. For reasons explained below, virtually no work has been carried on in the United Nations system with respect to qualitative indicators, that is, subjective or perceptual measures of individual well-being.

5. Because of its relatively short and recent history, rapid evolution and lack of a strong underlying conceptual framework based on theory, the field of social indicators is marked by persistent terminological confusion that has led to a rather loose use and understanding of the term. Typically, for example, semantic confusion may arise over what social indicators are and are not, how they differ from social statistics, what is the difference between quantitative and qualitative indicators, and so on. Accordingly, before proceeding to a discussion of efforts in the United Nations system to improve social indicators, it is important first to address briefly the issue of what is meant by social indicators in the present report.

II. HISTORY, CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL INDICATORS

6. Social indicators, as conventionally defined, 2/ are statistics of direct normative interest that facilitate the process of arriving at a concise, comprehensive and balanced judgement about social conditions. Generally, they help reduce abstract and unmeasurable concepts into surrogate components that lend themselves more readily to measurement. Social indicators accordingly have two important characteristics: they are surrogates and they are measures. Implicitly or explicitly, moreover, they postulate some theory of social behaviour that serves to relate the variables under consideration.

7. Most definitions of social indicators tend to emphasize output measures more than input measures, on the grounds that the volume of inputs applied to specific problems cannot be taken as suitable proxies for outputs because of the host of other factors that may also have an effect. In practice, however, the scope of social indicators is generally perceived in the United Nations system as including measures of input, throughput, intermediate output and final output. For example, in the health sector, social indicators may be seen as including input measures, such as the number of doctors per capita; throughput measures, such as the number of vaccinations made; intermediate output measures, such as extension of life expectancy or reduction in infant mortality; and final output measures, such as subjective responses on the quality of health. The broader notion of social indicators, encompassing

output and input variables presumed to be related to them, is that utilized in the present report.

8. The origins of the social indicator movement are intimately tied to the long-standing concern of Governments to measure social and living conditions and trends. The indicator movement grew out of the concept of externalities in welfare economics and was given major international impetuses, first by the holding of a United Nations expert group meeting on the subject in 1954, and subsequently when research on living standards was promoted following recommendations of the World Employment Conference organized by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1976 that the primary objective of development should be the satisfaction of basic needs. Shortly thereafter, the World Bank initiated work on indicators to determine the level of resources required to meet core basic needs over a specific period, as well as its possible role in meeting those needs. Other national and international efforts also contributed in significant ways to the progress made in developing and improving social indicators.

9. Over the years, the social indicator movement spread to many areas of inquiry and came to encompass a wide variety of methodological approaches. By the beginning of the 1990s, both basic data compilation and indicators development had reached a high degree of sophistication, as the United Nations system and Governments in developed and developing countries sought effective ways of being informed on population trends, health and education levels, employment conditions, social expenditures and their output, and so on. In many cases, moreover, indicators were integrated into larger systems of measurement in order to enhance their contribution to analysis and policy-making. One of the challenges sometimes facing researchers and decision makers, therefore, has been to know when, under what circumstances and how to use the wide variety of indicator approaches available to them.

10. Since the concepts underlying social conditions represent a synthesis of various aspects of well-being and the circumstances that affect it, the measurement of social conditions can be approached from different perspectives. Likewise, the distinctive ways in which social indicators may be applied to social conditions can result in quite different findings, with questions concerning the relative validity of the various conclusions often difficult to resolve. Different conclusions in particular may arise depending on whether quantitative or qualitative indicator approaches are utilized.

11. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative indicators is useful to note, not only for the above reason but also because the two are singled out for review by the resolution requesting the preparation of the present report, and because the United Nations system has given unequal consideration to the two. Generally speaking, both indicator approaches are conceptually derived and have quantitative inputs. Quantitative indicators, however, are variables that facilitate counting the occurrences of a given social phenomenon, whereas qualitative indicators are concerned with reports from individuals about their feelings, perceptions and responses. In addition, the quantitative approach defines social conditions and standards of living in

terms of goods and services thought to contribute to desired states of existence, while the qualitative conceptualization allows individuals to define for themselves the quality of their lives. In other words, the former considers its value framework as given and more or less self-evident, whereas the latter recognizes the plurality and relativity of value frameworks and perspectives on any given social situation. Since neither form of indicator alone is able to give a fully accurate portrayal of reality, in many social situations they are better used together.

12. In their work on social indicators, the organizations of the United Nations system have focused mainly on improving ways of objectively measuring living conditions, based on quantitative indicators corresponding to each of the components of living conditions and the resources used by Governments and households to acquire them. As already pointed out, little systematic work has been carried out within or between United Nations agencies to develop and refine social indicators that might better reflect the subjective elements of well-being. The main reason for this is evident: given the economic, social and cultural heterogeneity of population groups within countries, not to mention across countries, any given objective condition can elicit very different subjective responses from different individuals, thus producing often weak correlations between objective indicators and the subjective responses of population subgroups. As a result, United Nations involvement in developing and applying qualitative indicators has been confined mainly to grass-roots-level studies of United Nations-supported pilot projects. However, as pointed out in the conclusions of the report, there are various intensely complex social areas of national and international concern and inquiry that, because they cannot be reduced to simple quantitative terms, would benefit from global research and analyses based on a judicious use of qualitative indicators.

III. INDICATORS ON SOCIAL SECTORS AND POPULATION SUBGROUPS

13. Most of the social indicator sets that have been developed by United Nations organizations reflect those organizations' domains of sectoral or social-group competence and responsibility. In recent years, many organizations in the United Nations system have been actively engaged in devising sets of indicators for monitoring nationally and, for comparative purposes, globally the progress achieved by Governments in meeting the goals and targets laid down in plans of action corresponding to international years, world declarations and decade-long strategies on issues of international concern. The value of these progress-oriented indicators to the measurement of social conditions and standards of living lies in their attempts to operationalize and measure some of the components of a multidimensional conceptualization of welfare. Inasmuch as many social indicators are closely related, the consideration of several together and the complementarity between some of them has been one of the major contributions of progress-oriented indicators to attempts at measuring changes in overall living conditions. The same is true of recent efforts to develop cross-sectoral indicators on population subgroups, such as women in particular (see below).

14. General reviews of the wide field of social indicators have been compiled in recent years by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat. 3/ Between them, they provide an overview of national and international approaches, concepts and programmes in social indicators up to the time each was published; set out frameworks for selecting and compiling social indicators; and examine the methodological aspects of using social indicators to measure and analyse socio-economic development.

15. In a number of instances, United Nations organizations working jointly have concentrated on developing social indicators in relatively specialized fields. This has been the case, for example, in sectoral areas of mutual concern, such as the Inter-Agency Food and Nutritional Surveillance Programme sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Orgnaization (WHO) and convened through the Subcommittee on Nutrition of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The Surveillance Programme has proposed the following nutritional status indicators as basic outcome indicators: birth weight, weight-for-age of children under five and height-for-age of primary school entrants. 4/ Also, as shown below, cooperation within the United Nations system is taking place between the Statistical Office and other United Nations entities that are responsible for implementing plans of action but lack statistical and indicator experience for devising suitable monitoring indicators. There also exist examples of cooperation in establishing strengthened field data collection capacity, such as the collaboration between the Statistical Office's National Household Survey Capability Programme and the World Bank's Social Dimensions of Adjustment Programme. Finally, as described below, a number of United Nations bodies are collaborating in proposing ways of integrating the indicator requirements of the various international plans of action so as to reduce the additional burden faced by developing countries in gathering data for the proposed indicators.

16. The above examples of inter-agency cooperation notwithstanding, the main responsibility for keeping track of global progress in implementing sectoral plans of action rests typically with the corresponding sector agencies in the United Nations system. Their monitoring domains have often been broad and their approaches eclectic. An example is FAO's development of social indicators to help Governments report on their progress in implementing the Programme of Action adopted in 1979 by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. 5/ FAO's primary indicators in monitoring the WCARRD Programme of Action cover the areas of alleviation of poverty; access to land, water and other natural resources; access of producers to inputs, markets, training and extension; development of non-farm activities; institutional aspects of education, training and extension services; and growth in the agricultural sector and in population. The FAO guidelines also stress the need to disaggregate indicators by socio-economic groups, age and sex in order to assess the impact of the policies and programmes of the World Conference on different groups and improve the targeting of public interventions for the rural poor.

17. There are other significant examples as well of United Nations efforts to improve and strengthen indicators related to specific international plans of action. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), for instance, is currently engaged in helping countries monitor and evaluate their progress in implementing the objectives of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. Measures proposed in that connection include quantitative indicators on land tenure, shelter affordability and employment generation in the shelter sector. In cooperation with the World Bank and UNDP, moreover, Habitat has been developing indicators on shelter quality and on the urban environment.

18. The broadest and perhaps most complex area for identifying, interpreting and developing social indicators has been the environment. In general, the task of converting science-based information systems into social indicators is fraught with difficulties. As the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development approaches, however, interest and activity in creating suitable indicators in this area has grown rapidly. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and, on an interregional basis, the Statistical Office of the Secretariat have been working towards the development of environmental indicators, while the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been invaluable as a global information base for the development of corresponding indicators. 6/ In addition to the urban indicators work noted in the preceding paragraph, important areas for socially oriented environmental indicators include human health in terms of contaminated or polluted air, water and food; environmental-related accidents and natural disasters; and collective and individual human responses, such as out-migration from ecologically degraded or fragile areas, changes in consumer behaviour and lifestyle, and so on.

19. Along more specifically sectoral lines, WHO has compiled, and assisted Governments in obtaining, health status indicators and indicators of the provision of health care that are relevant to monitoring national and international progress in attaining the targets of the Global Strategy of Health for All by the Year 2000. 7/ While a list of 12 core indicators was agreed upon by the World Health Assembly, additional indicators have been adopted by the regional committees of four of the six WHO regions. WHO was also instrumental in devising indicators for monitoring global progress in achieving the targets established in the framework of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. 8/

20. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been continuing its work on developing concepts and methods for cultural indicators within the UNESCO framework for cultural statistics. 9/ Together with UNICEF, it is also engaged in developing indicators for monitoring the goals and targets proposed in the Framework for Action adopted by the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs in 1990. 10/ These refer to early childhood care and development, universal access to and completion of primary education, learning achievement, adult literacy and provision of basic education in other essential skills.

21. ILO has continued its work on the collection of labour statistics as well as on the development of international standards for the collection of labour statistics. It is also engaged in the development of indicators to monitor new labour market processes and vulnerable groups such as the self-employed, low-paid workers, women and workers in the informal sector.

22. Many of the new developments in social indicators have taken place in conjunction with international activities and events having various subgroups of the population as their focal concern. 11/ These events include the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the World Assembly and International Plan of Action on Ageing, the celebration in 1985 of the International Youth Year, and the 1990 Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. A number of important advances have been made in elaborating indicators on social groups, and in particular on women. Pursuant to the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year in 1975, for example, a series of United Nations sales publications has been prepared and issued on indicators concerning the situation of women, and on their role in development. 12/ This work was carried out by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. With respect to the goals of the World Declaration on Children for the 1990s, UNICEF is in the process of developing indicators relating to child survival, development and protection, and of reviewing supporting indicators in such related areas as women's health and education, nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, basic education and children in difficult circumstances. 13/ New programmes of indicator development are also under consideration with respect to the elderly and the disabled. 14/

23. For all the United Nations system's efforts to improve existing indicators and, as necessary, devise new ones, there remain severe problems in most developing countries of gathering and analysing the corresponding statistical data on a reliable, frequent and timely basis. A generally serious lack of observable data, for example, has been found in relation to the following indicators: percentage of dwellings with potable drinking-water and/or sanitary facilities; percentage of population with reasonable access to primary health centres; percentage of children who are malnourished; morbidity rates; and so on. In some instances where observation-based statistical data exist only on a partial and occasional basis, United Nations agencies have tried to bridge the gap by using estimates. An example of a tool for such purposes is the MORTPACK software developed by the Population Division of the Secretariat for mortality estimations. While estimates have generally been useful in giving quantitative assessments of the prevailing conditions of many countries in fields where they lack detailed, timely data, their utilization for up-to-date monitoring and policy purposes poses severe problems. 15/ In many instances, moreover, pervasive problems of sampling and non-sampling errors further complicate analysis.

24. The statistical problems that exist in many developing countries in compiling social indicators is a matter of utmost concern. The recent review by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development of the compiling of improved social indicators in Côte d'Ivoire, India, Kenya and Morocco provides a glimpse of the problems that can exist even in countries with long and extensive experience in social statistics and indicator research, or which have benefited from recent, large-scale external assistance in this area. 16/ In recognition of the potentially heavy statistical needs in Member States for monitoring progress towards international social goals in the 1990s, a working group composed of UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat has, as already mentioned, set itself the task of devising an integrated, consolidated approach to implementing the monitoring processes. That approach is being undertaken in collaboration with national Governments and is expected to provide a sufficiently broad framework for other international organizations to participate. Initially, attention will be focused on a limited set of indicators for which there is an urgent national policy need. A small number of countries will serve as pilot tests for determining the best methodology and strategy for gathering the necessary statistics. The approach will thus be concerned mainly with ascertaining the availability and quality of each targeted indicator, the nature and extent of existing gaps, and the resources needed to close those gaps.

IV. MODEL-BASED SYSTEMS OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL INDICATORS

25. While most of the indicator-related work in the United Nations system has been concerned with the development of single and multiple domain indicators, there also exist examples of indicators being developed as components of explicit conceptual models of social systems. For example, the Statistical Office's project entitled "Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics" (SSDS) and the ILO and World Bank's more economic-oriented social accounting matrices represent attempts in the 1970s at devising social accounting frameworks comparable to national income accounts. The Statistical Office's model consisted of linking individuals' life-cycle achievements, or self-actualization, with various institutional aspects of government expenditure. 17/ Social accounting matrices focused on identifying different types of households, modelled how they earn and spend their money, and examined the effects of changing levels and structures of production on income distribution and household consumption. 18/ The analytical and data collection demands made by project and the matrices, however, proved difficult for most developing countries to satisfy. As a result, the project has been reoriented to work on simpler social indicators and the social accounting matrices have been applied in a few developing countries mainly as an element of the World Bank's living standards measurement study (see below).

26. Despite the mixed record of these earlier efforts, interest in devising model-based systems of integrated social indicators remains high. This interest in analytical indicators is driven in part by concern over the growing incidence of poverty in many developing countries, as well as the

likely negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on many of the poor and most vulnerable segments of the population.

27. Analytical indicators form an important part of the social dimensions of adjustment project launched in sub-Saharan Africa in 1987 by the World Bank, with support from UNDP. 19/ That project has built upon survey methods and indicators tested under the living standards measurement study initiated by the World Bank in 1980. The model, or conceptual foundation, of the social dimensions of adjustment project assumes that the effects of adjustment and other macro-economic changes affect households through markets and the social and economic infrastructure. Accordingly, indicators have been employed as parts of a hierarchical information system at the macro-, meso- and micro- or household levels. Those indicators have been devised for a wide variety of issues and topics, including the reasons for malnutrition; the determinants of school enrolment ratios; the quality of education; household saving behaviour; income inequality and various characteristics of the poor; and the distributional impact of user fees. The social indicators that have mainly been used are ones that are more likely to respond quickly to external changes, that is, student drop-out rates as opposed to literacy rates.

28. The conceptual foundation and indicators of the project were developed at World Bank headquarters in order that the empirical work be consistent and comparable across countries. Moreover, in view of the limitations of the established statistical systems in many of the countries participating in the project, the World Bank has relied heavily on foreign consultants to ensure the timely gathering and processing of quality data. A problem with this approach could be that the countries' capacity to continue the statistical and indicator approaches introduced by the World Bank may end once the project is over.

29. Another area in which the United Nations system has been active recently in developing model-based systems of social indicators is in measuring the incidence of poverty. The traditional approach to measuring poverty has been to calculate an income poverty line based on the specification of a minimum calorie intake and its corresponding cost, which is then multiplied by some factor to take account of non-food items also necessary for subsistence living. In view of the diversified nature of poverty, however, the income-based approach to measurement has been criticized for its narrow economic and physiological basis in deriving poverty lines and for ignoring the role that access, or lack thereof, to publicly supplied basic needs and services, which are often free-of-charge or subsidized, could play in poverty determination. According to this broader interpretation of poverty, income-based poverty lines underestimate the incidence of poverty because they concentrate on private, recurrent consumption and thus disregard unsatisfied basic needs corresponding to government-supplied social services and investment in infrastructure.

30. Pursuant to a decision originating from the Declaration of the First Regional Conference on Poverty, held at Cartagena, Colombia, in 1988, UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) undertook

a joint regional project to develop a system of social indicators for better measuring the incidence of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. The integrated poverty measurement method, as it has been called, 20/ consisted first of developing indicators of unsatisfied basic needs. A number of indicators applicable to housing quality, access to primary schools and dependency ratios were identified with the assistance of the FAO office in ECLAC, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC) office of ILO, WHO/Pan American Health Organization, UNESCO and UNICEF.

31. The unsatisfied basic needs indicators determine the levels below which households are considered not to have access to basic needs. Because the satisfaction of each need is to some extent conditioned by the satisfaction of others, a household is considered poor if it scores an inadequate level in any of the needs in the model. In other words, the method does not allow for substitution between different needs, which also means that the dimensions of the model may not be aggregated and weighted on a single scale - a topic that is discussed below.

32. In the integrated poverty measurement method, the unsatisfied basic needs measurement and the income-based poverty line measurement are viewed as complementary. Hence, when applied simultaneously, the total incidence of poverty results from the union of the two sets of measures, not their intersection. 21/ Those households which are classified as poor under both measurement methods are typically chronically poor, while those deemed poor only by the income-based line include many of the occasional and newly poor. When mapping the geographical distribution of poverty in accordance with the use of integrated poverty measurement variables and census data, policy-helpful information is gained not only on how poor the population is, but also in what aspects people are poor and where suitable corrective interventions can be undertaken.

V. COMPOSITE INDEXES

33. In parallel with the efforts made over the years to identify and collect information on selected indicators, attempts have on occasion also been made to develop composite indexes, or constructs of weighted, composite indicators, to throw light on levels and trends in general living conditions. These indexes have usually been the product of attempts at giving a broader view of the human condition than is available from GDP per capita figures, but because of subjective weighting criteria and the synthetic nature of the measures used, they often give rise to problems of interpretation.

34. In 1970, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development experimented with developing a system of living standard indexes that avoided monetary units altogether and consisted more of summary statements than of selected social indicators as such. The Institute's general development index, as well as the corresponding sets of measures, were not intended simply to be complements of GDP, but substitute measures of development in the

combined economic and social sense of the word. Moreover, the index did not assign absolute levels to each country in domains such as education and health, but rather the country's level in those fields relative to its general level of social and economic development. The index was based on 18 socio-economic indicators for 58 developing and developed countries. 22/

35. As with social indicators in general, analytical interest in the development and use of summary or composite indicators has surged in recent years. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, UNDP and ECLAC have developed a social progress index that links together measures defining the degree of national development with indicators of population welfare and of the quantity and quality of life. 23/ A less complex index is the human development index (HDI), which is highlighted in the UNDP annual human development reports. 24/ The latter index consists of three equally weighted indicators: life expectancy, literacy and per capita GDP adjusted for purchasing power parity. Countries are ranked in the index according to their relative performances in the three indicators, which are averaged to obtain each country's composite standing in the scale. The human development index thus provides profiles of countries at different levels of development and with different socio-economic systems, which facilitate fruitful investigations into the relationship between the level, rates and patterns of economic growth and social progress.

36. Adjustments in the 1991 human development index indicator series include (a) the incorporation of mean years of education into the literacy indicator, at half the weight given to literacy; and (b) modifying per capita GDP calculations by including incomes above the estimated poverty line of $US 4,861, but weighting the increments above the line on a sliding scale as they get higher. The reason for those adjustments is to facilitate comparisons among developed countries, that is, countries with high literacy and income levels, in terms of the performance of each one in indicators of knowledge and command over resources needed for a decent living.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

37. The United Nations system has made much progress in developing and further improving indicators for measuring social conditions and standards of living in the world. These advances have been important for gaining a better knowledge and understanding about social phenomena and for helping decision makers evaluate and improve social policies. However, certain important gaps in the development of indicators remain. More attention, for example, could be given to the development and improvement of indicators on torture, censorship, the right to assemble peacefully and other dimensions of human rights and freedom, and to integrate those indicators in model-driven analyses and in composite indexes of social conditions and human well-being. Likewise, United Nations system-wide efforts to develop and apply qualitative indicators could be instrumental in gaining more understanding and knowledge about subtle, subjective and sensitive issues having a crucial bearing on many groups' well-being, namely, ethnic or sex-related patterns of discrimination

or exploitation, meaningful social and political participation, social issues in drug trafficking and substance abuse, various dimensions of criminal behaviour and personal security, and so on.

38. The improvement and further development of social indicators on social conditions and standards of living is important to the preparation of United Nations reports on the social situation. The less aggregated the indicators, however, the better. A glance, for example, at the quadrennial reports on the world social situation of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat or the UNDP annual human development reports shows that the analyses contained in those reports are not simply culled from other indicator-based studies. Instead, much of the work in putting together such reports consists of compiling social statistics and, where appropriate and feasible, developing sets of indicators, frameworks and aggregations as needed. It is therefore important to appreciate the rationale, capabilities and limitations of indicators and their applications, and to avoid using social statistics and indicators indiscriminately for no better reason than that they are there. In that respect, moreover, the role and significance of indicators should be kept in perspective: they are only one of a number of tools and approaches to be used in preparing analytical reports on social conditions in the world.

Notes

1/ The meeting of experts was organized pursuant to requests made by the General Assembly (resolutions 40/179 and 44/234) and the Economic and Social Council (resolutions 1987/6 and 1989/4), and to recommendations made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions.

2/ For an extensive treatment of the subject of social indicators, see M. Bulmer, Social Measurement and Social Indicators: Issues of Policy and Theory, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1981; C. Taylor, ed., Indicator Systems for Political, Economic, and Social Analysis, Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain/Anton Hain, Cambridge, United States of America, 1980; and A. Szalai and F. Andrews, eds., The Quality of Life: Comparative Studies, Sage Studies in International Sociology 20, London, 1980.

3/ See D. McGranahan, E. Pizarro and C. Richard, Measurement and Analysis of Socio-Economic Development: An Inquiry into International Indicators of Development and Quantitative Interrelations of Social and Economic Components of Development, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, 1985; and United Nations, Handbook on Social Indicators, Series F, No. 49 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XVII.6), New York, 1989.

Notes (continued)

4/ See United Nations, "Report on progress made in the development of a coordinated United Nations system database for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest and the development of related national databases" (E/CN.3/1991/20), New York, 1991, para. 17.

5/ See FAO, "Guidelines on socio-economic indicators for monitoring and evaluating agrarian reform and rural development", FAO, Rome, 1988 (mimeo).

6/ See, for example, ECE, "Draft set of ECE environmental indicators" (CES/548/Add.6/Rev.1), Geneva, 17 December 1985; and UNEP, Environmental Data Report, Alden Press, Oxford, 1989.

7/ See WHO, Development of Indicators for Monitoring Progress Towards Health for All by the Year 2000, WHO, Geneva, 1981; and WHO, "Global Strategy of Health for All: monitoring 1988-1989, detailed analysis of global indicators", WHO, Geneva, 1989.

8/ See WHO, "Guiding principles for national water supply and sanitation monitoring" (CWS/86/6), Geneva, 1986.

9/ See UNESCO, "The UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS)" (CES/AC.44/11), Paris, 1986; and UNESCO, "Background paper prepared for the meeting of experts on indicators of culture, Vienna, 8-11 April 1986" (ST-86/Conf.601/4), Paris, 1986.

10/ See UNICEF, Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990, UNICEF, New York, 1990, appendix 2.

11/ See United Nations, "International coordination of social statistics and indicators and development of statistics and indicators on special population groups" (E/CN.3/1989/11), New York, 1988, paras. 30 and 31.

12/ See United Nations, Compendium of Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Women 1986, Series K, No. 5 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.88.XVII.6), New York, 1986; and "Statistics and indicators on women's participation in the economy", in United Nations, 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2), New York, 1989.

13/ See E/CN.3/1991/20, op. cit., annex.

14/ See E/CN.3/1989/11, op. cit., para. 39; and Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, "Development of statistics and indicators for monitoring the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons" (CSDHA/DDP/GME/4), Vienna, 1987.

15/ See E/CN.3/1991/20, op. cit., paras. 47-54.

Notes (continued)

16/ See United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, "Case-studies carried out by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and on preparations for the planned international statistical meeting on indicators of patterns of consumption" (E/CN.3/1991/21), New York, 1990.

17/ See, for example, R. Johnston and D. O'Brien, "International cooperation on a framework for the integration of social, demographic, and related economic statistics", in C. Taylor, ed., op. cit., pp. 69-72.

18/ See D. Ghai, M. Hopkins and D. McGranahan, "Some reflections on human and social indicators for development", United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Discussion Paper No. 6, Geneva, October 1988, pp. 7 and 8.

19/ See, for example, World Bank, "Report of the World Bank on progress made in implementing the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project" (E/CN.3/1991/27), New York, 1991; C. Grootaert and R. Kanbur, Policy-Oriented Analysis of Poverty and the Social Dimensions of Structural Adjustment, SDA Working Paper Series, World Bank, Washington, DC, 1990; and R. Chander, C. Grootaert and G. Pyatt, Living Standards Surveys in Developing Countries, LSMS Working Paper No. 1, World Bank, Washington, DC, 1980.

20/ See UNDP, Development without Poverty, a report prepared for the Second Regional Conference on Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Quito, 20-23 November 1990, chaps. 1 and 2.

21/ In other words, when counting up the total number of poor households, the overlap of families that are deemed poor by both income and basic needs criteria should be subtracted from the total of both classifications.

22/ See D. Ghai et al., op. cit., p. 9.

23/ See UNDP, op. cit., paras. 99-107.

24/ See, for example, UNDP, Human Development Report 1990, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, chap. 1.

UNITED NATIONS

A E

General Assembly

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/138
E/1991/52
23 April 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-sixth session
Item 78 (e) of the preliminary list*
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1991
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/227

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	3
II.	NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS	5 - 69	4
	A. Action at national level	5 - 25	4
	1. Policies, strategies and plans	5 - 10	4
	2. Legislation and institutions	11 - 15	5
	3. Planning and management tools	16 - 18	7
	4. Information and awareness-building	19 - 21	8
	5. Sectoral action	22 - 25	8

* A/46/50.

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
B.	Development cooperation	26 - 35	10
	1. Bilateral development cooperation	27 - 31	10
	2. Multilateral development cooperation	32 - 35	12
C.	Action by the United Nations system	36 - 61	13
	1. Policies and programmes	37 - 58	14
	2. Coordination	59 - 61	20
D.	International cooperation on global environmental concerns	62 - 69	21
	1. Action to address major global environmental issues	62 - 68	21
	2. Mobilization of new and additional finance	69	24
III.	CONCLUSION	70	24

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General on actions taken by Governments and the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system with regard to sustainable and environmentally sound development (A/44/350-E/1989/99), and adopted resolution 44/227 of 22 December 1989, in which it set forth views and recommendations to facilitate and promote implementation of its resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, both of 11 December 1987, on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, respectively.

2. Following its consideration of the report, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a progress report on implementation of resolution 44/227 for submission to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Economic and Social Council, and to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992. It also requested the Secretary-General to prepare, for submission to the Conference, and to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session, a new consolidated report on substantive follow-up to resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 by Governments and organizations of the United Nations system.

3. At its fifteenth session, the Governing Council of UNEP noted that Governments, as well as the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, have been, and continue to be, responsive to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, and hoped that further progress towards achieving sustainable and environmentally sound development would be achieved and that implementation of those resolutions should be made a matter of continuing concern. In its resolution 44/227, the General Assembly expressed concern that much more needed to be done in translating the increased understanding of the need for sustainable and environmentally sound development into concrete action and invited Governments and the governing bodies of the organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to intensify further their efforts towards promoting and achieving sustainable and environmentally sound development.

4. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNEP brought to the attention of Governments and the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system General Assembly resolution 44/227, along with resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, by letters of 11 May 1990 and 17 August 1990, requesting information on progress of implementation. He also requested similar information from development assistance bodies. Twenty-eight countries, 12 official development assistance organizations and 26 institutions from the United Nations system responded. The present report is based mainly on those responses. It is intended to outline the nature and scope of progress made with some examples; it does not purport to be a comprehensive summary of the information responses. The new and consolidated

report to be prepared for the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 will, inter alia, draw further on the information already received.

II. NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS

A. Action at national level

1. Policies, strategies and plans

5. Policies of sustainable and environmentally sound development have taken various forms. In Bolivia a presidential decree has been promulgated on the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment. In Ecuador and Honduras too, support has been provided at the highest level to a national policy on sustainable and environmentally sound development. Many countries have held national seminars and workshops on environment and sustainable development, and made recommendations for action at various levels. Several have prepared national environmental action plans, some of which, apart from policy, programme and institutional recommendations, have contained project proposals as well. Some, for example, Mauritius and the Seychelles, have held national donor round tables to mobilize funds to implement environmental action plans. Many have continued to develop national conservation strategies.

6. The conceptual framework for national environmental action plans, policies, programmes and conservation strategies has tended to converge in that ideas such as the preventive approach, the precautionary principle, use of economic incentives in addition to regulations, specifications of environmental quality standards in relation to the needs and circumstances of people, coordination among different sectors, participation by and resolution of conflicts among interest groups and sectors, enhancing national institutional and human response capabilities, internalizing environmental sensibility in sectoral development policies and programmes and so on are receiving increasing attention.

7. In Nigeria the national environmental policy sets broad environmental goals and sectoral policy objectives, proposes new institutions and legal arrangements, and indicates how public participation would contribute to environmental management. In Burkina Faso environmental policy provides for the protection of forests, firewood management, the improvement of living conditions and institutional support. In Bhutan and Jordan population and environmental issues are required to be seen as an integral part of development planning, while in China the basic policy calls for a coordinated approach to the environment, economy and society. The latter requires incorporation of environmental protection into sectoral policies and adjustment of industrial structure and its spatial distribution. In Egypt and Malaysia the national five-year plans include sections of environmental protection and improvement. Benin has chosen a similar approach and the environment is made part of social policy in Cyprus's development plan for

1989-1993. In France a national plan for the environment has been devised, stipulating integration of the environment into economic and sectoral policies.

8. Indonesia has established a plan for the use of natural resources and Madagascar a strategy with emphasis on people's participation, physical planning, institutional development and regulations. The Philippine strategy for sustainable development recognizes the need for proper resource pricing and property rights, and aims at preservation of biodiversity, rehabilitation of degraded land, residue management, control of population growth and human resource development. Singapore's strategy seeks to incorporate environmental considerations into the development planning process. Thailand's seventh national economic and social development plan emphasizes education and participation, the improvement of income distribution, the quality of life and environmental protection and conservation of natural resources and of energy.

9. In Canada the Federal Government has launched initiatives to promote sustainable development through consultation and research, leading to the development of the "green plan". It has reformed the official environment assessment and review and decision-making by way of advancement of scientific research, monitoring, information, environmental education, legislation and regulation, and use of economic instruments. France's green plan gives priority to environmental education, scientific and technological research, economic and environmental impact assessment and public participation. It reflects two complementary approaches, namely, integration of environmental considerations into economic policy and sectoral policies, and institutional reforms.

10. The Netherlands has prepared the national environmental policy plan-plus, following its first policy plan of 1987. The new plan clarifies what sustainable development is, outlines specific actions necessary to achieve the targets of the earlier plan, and states other policy implications. In Norway a white paper on environment and development outlines the country's intended follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development; a second white paper sets out programmes for the period 1990-1993. The Government has also adopted a policy for global sustainable development that highlights the relationship between national action and solution of global environmental problems. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland a white paper emphasizes integration of the environment into all sectors, and protection of the environment in the European context, inter alia, by means of support to integrated agricultural and environmental policies of the European Community. The United Kingdom's national policy also calls for prudent and efficient energy use and other resources as part of the country's commitment to help solve global environmental problems.

2. Legislation and institutions

11. Several countries have established, strengthened or reorganized institutions to deal better with environmental matters and to relate

environmental action to development, and many countries have introduced or strengthened environmental laws, regulations and standards. In the Netherlands a special advisory body reviews practical implications of sustainable development. In Finland the Commission on Environment and Development will make proposals for policy and institutional arrangements. A similarly intended arrangement is made in Afghanistan. The Agency on Environment and Energy has been established in France. In the United Kingdom major environment-cum-development issues are submitted for Cabinet decision. In Malaysia the National Steering Committee on Environment and Development and in Costa Rica the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Environmental Matters have been set up.

12. National Environmental Committees in Bhutan and Benin service the National Planning Commissions and are responsible for developing the countries' strategies for environmentally sound and sustainable development. In China the Environment Protection Commission of the State Council advises on and coordinates environmental action of government departments. In Egypt the Environment Affairs Agency has been strengthened, with branch offices in all regions, and the Environmental Research Council has been created in the Academy of Sciences. The Council for the Conservation of Natural Resources and the Protection of the Environment is the lead coordinating body on environmental matters in Oman, with executive functions vested increasingly in the Ministry of the Environment.

13. Incorporation of environmental considerations into the policies and programmes of development sectors is the idea behind the creation of environmental focal points in line ministries in Belgium. These focal points are supported by a federal-regional coordination committee. In China and the United Kingdom some government departments have newly set up, or consolidated, their environmental capacities. Everywhere such units are seen to be complementary to the central environment department or authority.

14. Federal-regional concertation in linking environment and development issues has received prominence in Canada. Round tables have been established in all but one of the provinces and territories in order to bring existing organizations together to achieve environment-economy integration, to serve as a catalyst for change, build consensus on sustainable development and define a strategy. A national round table on environment and economy includes as members senior federal and provincial Cabinet ministers, corporate executives and distinguished people in academia, research and non-governmental institutions. Its purpose is to evaluate policies and decision-making processes and to consider planning and management tools for review in 1991 by a national conference on sustainable development.

15. Many countries have reported new legislation, for example, for maintenance of ecological balance and living conditions for sustainable development (Burkina Faso), for pesticide imports (Jordan), for the protection of the marine environment and the prevention of air pollution (Egypt) and for the control of toxic chemicals (Belgium). Some countries are trying to develop umbrella environmental legislation, since laws with a bearing on

environmental management are typically spread over many sectors. Uganda, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Rwanda have prepared and strengthened their national environmental legislation in collaboration with UNEP. Difficulties of enforcing environmental legislation have been pronounced. The constraints include inadequacies of technical expertise, institutional capacities and equipment to monitor and enforce accountability for compliance. Adaptation of standards and norms to the countries' circumstances and needs has also posed difficulties. Many countries have reported legislative measures to ensure national compliance with global environmental agreements.

3. Planning and management tools

16. In Canada the Environmental Assessment Act will help implement the Government's commitment to integrate environmental considerations into the project planning and implementation process. It will also create procedures for environmental assessment in respect to specific issues. In Indonesia and Jordan environmental impact assessment is made compulsory by government regulation. In Norway the authorities require impact assessments for new industrial enterprises that might have major effects on the environment, either within the country or outside. In Oman approval of projects with a potential environmental impact is made contingent on satisfactory environmental impact assessment; all other projects require an environmental impact statement based on an initial assessment. In the Netherlands environmental impact assessment is a legislative requirement.

17. Economic incentives are increasingly being applied as a supplement to regulation to link environmental and developmental policies and programmes. In some European countries (e.g. Finland, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom) there has been experience in applying environmental taxes and charges to encourage recycling, economize use of resources and control pollution. Studies on incentives and on limiting or phasing out subsidies that cause environmental damage are ongoing in many countries.

18. In Norway the Central Bureau of Statistics issues regular environmental and natural resources statistical briefings: integration of the resource accounts and policy analysis has been attempted in the energy sector. The "polluter pays" principle is observed, as in several other European countries, and financial incentives are being considered to reduce pollution and to promote the development and implementation of new and environmentally sound technologies. In the United Kingdom environmental considerations are increasingly brought to bear on land use planning. Studies on how best to reflect environmental damage costs and benefits in project appraisal and in prices are going on in many countries.

4. Information and awareness-building

19. Many countries have prepared reports on the state of their national environment and on specific environmental issues. In Canada the round tables on environment and the economy have helped interpret and communicate ideas on sustainable development and to stimulate changes in perceptions, goals and behaviour. Its International Institute for Sustainable Development was established to promote involvement of public and private sectors and non-governmental organizations in sustainable development. A large number of awareness-building and activist institutions for environment and sustainable development have been established or strengthened in developed and developing countries alike. Issues of the linkages of environmental management to economic development and the distribution of its benefits have begun receiving increasing attention in academic, government and other work.

20. Environmental news networks have been established and strengthened at global, regional and national levels. The federal environmental news network in Canada works with eight regional networks. In Egypt mass media information campaigns are conducted on air pollution, water conservation, sanitation and sustainable development. A people's participation programme in Indonesia supports the conservation of natural resources, while in Madagascar and in Trinidad and Tobago, programmes have been initiated for communication on conservation of resources. Afghanistan, Jordan and the Philippines have introduced or intensified programmes on environmental education and public participation in environmental improvement. An NGO Council on the Environment has been active in Singapore. In the Netherlands a target group management procedure has been developed for discussion and awareness-building on environmental policies.

21. There has been an upsurge in the number of publications, reports, features, news items and documentaries on environmental matters. China publishes a quarterly on world environment, in Chinese and English, in addition to a monthly bulletin, for overseas distribution. The Inter-Press Service, a radio and print media network in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, disseminates news features and items on environment and development in English, Portuguese and Spanish. The Press Foundation of Asia, a network of journalists in Asia and the Pacific, performs a similar service in English. Television networks, especially in North America and Europe, have focused extensively on global environmental issues and a large number of documentaries have been produced on environment and development issues. Artists, writers and entertainers have become increasingly involved in environment-related activities. The regional preparatory conferences for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have further enhanced awareness of environment and development issues.

5. Sectoral action

22. Many countries have strengthened environmental management in development sectors, for example, energy, industry, agriculture and transport.

Application of the "polluter pays" principle in some countries has helped internalize environmental responsibilities in sectoral development policies and programmes. In several European countries targets have been set up to deal with priority environmental issues and responsibility to comply with regional and global environmental agreements is reflected by sectoral measures. Canada's green plan includes programmes relating to toxic substances, wastes, environmental emergencies, management of renewable soil, forestry and fishery resources, apart from agriculture and the global commons. Egypt promotes food security, inter alia, through land reclamation and irrigation and drainage schemes, while controlling erosion of fertile land and fixation of sand dunes to combat desertification receive particular attention. Application of pesticides and fertilizers is controlled and food safety regulations address bacteriological and radiological contamination.

23. France's green plan lays down goals and action programmes for air quality, access to and quality of freshwater, protection of the marine environment and coastal ecosystems, prevention of soil degradation, disposal of domestic and industrial wastes, urban environment, noise, conservation of nature, land management and prevention of environmental risks. In the energy sector economic measures, including pricing, help keep consumption stable. Public transportation, including new urban transport systems and commercial mass transport, receive the highest priority. The plan includes targets for energy conservation and the elimination of chlorofluorocarbons, provides for new and additional resources to support the tropical forestry action plan, for measures for the protection of the Antarctic and the control of hazardous substances and their transboundary movement.

24. In the Netherlands, to combat climate change, programmes will be accelerated to stabilize by 1994-1995 emissions of carbon dioxide at the level of 1989-1990; measures include energy conservation, reductions in the use of coal, improvements in public transportation and automobile use habits, and prevention of waste. Acidification control involves traffic control measures and city planning to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbons and carbon dioxide, financial incentives to change commuting patterns, use of cars and motor vehicle design, and encouraging public transport. Waste prevention and recycling are promoted by screening waste flows and through targeted product policy, quality control with regard to raw materials, in-company environmental action with permits, cash deposit systems and regulatory levies. Product policy aims at optimal use of raw materials, minimum energy consumption in production, reduced emissions and waste flows over the life cycle of a product, improved product norms and better product and process design.

25. The United Kingdom's sectoral environmental action includes control of pollution of atmosphere and rivers from industrial and agricultural sources. Transportation and production of energy receive particular attention; other priorities are conservation of marine resources and protection of the North Sea from direct and indirect discharges, dumping of sewage sludge, incineration at sea and oil pollution. Programmes include land use planning and environmental consideration in the planning of towns and cities.

B. Development cooperation

26. In bilateral and multilateral development assistance alike there has been a widespread commitment, by way of enunciation of policy, for support to projects and programmes for environmentally sound and sustainable development. This has been generally followed by procedures and institutional arrangements to put the policy into effect.

1. Bilateral development cooperation

27. Austria's development cooperation policy gives priority to integration of environmental considerations into economic and sectoral planning, including establishment of national strategies and action programmes. Analysis of project proposals follows the checklist on environmental impact assessment of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Forest management and reforestation and institutional development for environmentally sound development receive notable support. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) fosters international cooperation to deal with global environmental problems and supports technology transfer to help developing countries in dealing with environmental problems. Canada's official development assistance charter requires environmental and social impact assessment of all proposed projects. Priorities are accorded to programmes and projects that improve the environment and regenerate natural resources, inform the public about environmental needs and support institutions that promote environmentally sound practices.

28. French development assistance gives priority to freestanding environmental projects and those promoting environmentally sound development. Attention is given to the needs of the least developed countries, to establishing national environmental profiles, medium-term environment programmes and national preparatory action for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. All assistance projects are subjected to environmental impact assessment. Debt-for-nature swaps are supported and funds committed to the Global Environment Facility to enable developing countries to deal with global environmental problems. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) observes a policy of support to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It has strengthened its technical and managerial capacity for environmental projects. Project design procedure requires that environmental considerations are incorporated from the earliest stage. In the assessment process the recipient countries' systems for considering the environment are taken into account and attention is given to conservation of natural resources and flora and fauna, control of pollution and impacts on environmental health. Institutional support, human resources development and training in research are among JICA priorities, apart from environmental information, country environmental profiles, natural resources surveys and research, master plans and projects to rehabilitate natural resources, reforestation, soil conservation and management, and conservation measures. JICA disbursements for environmental technical cooperation increased to 10,033 million yen in 1989.

29. The Netherlands' development cooperation policy emphasizes prevention of negative environmental impacts, action for environmental protection and development of sound environmental institutions. Instructions have been issued for assessment of environmental effects of programmes and projects; training of in-house staff, checklists of environmental impacts and environmental profiles are used to ensure follow-up. Awareness-building and public participation in environmental issues receive high priority; other priorities include nature conservation, forestry, soil conservation, integrated pest management, water supply and sanitation, and the tropical forestry action plan. A policy goal of Norwegian aid is to preserve the base for future growth through ecologically sustainable development and better management of natural resources. All projects undergo an environmental impact assessment and national environmental profiles and conservation strategies receive notable support.

30. The Saudi fund for development supports projects to improve rural and urban living conditions. Priority is given to identification of environmental needs and incorporation of environmental aspects into agriculture, energy, health, housing, drinking-water and sanitation. Integration of environmental consideration into all projects is a specific goal of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Its bilateral budget includes an allocation of 225 million kronor for bilateral environmental assistance and 125 million kronor for multilateral environmental assistance. Switzerland's development assistance requires an environmental impact assessment for all projects as part of the project cycle. It gives priority to tropical forest conservation.

31. Environmental issues are central to the operations of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom. ODA introduced a manual on environmental appraisal to be applied at all stages of the project cycle. It facilitates access of the developing countries to environmentally sound technology, particularly for control of global warming. Its priorities include conservation of biological diversity and wildlife, sustainable agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, environmentally sound irrigation, livestock management and efficient use of energy. The United Kingdom's forestry initiative received major funding from 1989 to assist developing countries in maximizing, in sustainable ways, economic and social benefits from their forests, controlling deforestation and promoting reforestation, increasing forest productivity and making a more productive use of agricultural land. ODA has also initiated programmes to address environmental problems of fast growing cities in the developing countries. Promotion of environmental awareness, education and training have become major elements of support. ODA also supports developing countries' efforts to achieve levels of population growth consistent with their economic, social and physical resources.

2. Multilateral development cooperation

32. The Asian Development Bank (AsDB) has developed country profiles or strategy reports that identify planning and management needs. It supports programmes in natural resource-based sectors, for example, agriculture, fisheries and energy, and follows formal environmental guidelines for infrastructure development, industry, energy, agriculture and natural resources. Environmental impact assessment is required for all projects but its depth and scope vary with project type. Funds are earmarked within project budgets for environmental assessments in order to provide for needed mitigation measures and economic analysis of environmental impacts is increasingly integrated into the appraisal process. AsDB has made economic policy analyses and recommendations on their adjustments in selected countries and has applied a broad-based approach to reconcile environmental and economic objectives in area development projects. It has assisted countries in formulating national environmental strategies including action programmes and environment-oriented projects and has provided notable support for environmental institution-building, human resources development, industrial environmental management, waste management and industrial pollution control.

33. The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) provides for environmental consideration in review and appraisal of projects. CABEI has established a fund for external debt conversion for the developing countries to channel resources for environmental, social and health projects. It finances training and technical assistance with a focus on natural parks and reserves and reforestation. The European Investment Bank (EIB) finances up to 60 per cent of costs of projects that include anti-pollution equipment involving greater protection than that required under prevailing standards. It does not lend outside the community if compliance with international environmental standards is in question; environmental impact assessment is mandatory, with public participation, for all environmentally sensitive projects in the Community. The overall impact on the environment is taken into account in assessing economic viability of a project and transfrontier pollution possibilities are scrutinized in particular. All projects for pollution control and environmental improvement are eligible for EIB financing and those making a substantial contribution to improving air, water and soil quality are increasingly funded. Other EIB environmental lending sectors include water conservation and management, waste management, soil conservation and reforestation, pollution control, urban development and safeguarding of cultural heritage. Of its total disbursements of 51.3 billion ECU during 1980-1989, 10.2 per cent was allocated to environmentally oriented investment; in 1989 alone environmental investment was 8.8 billion ECU, or 16.9 per cent of the total.

34. The World Bank's agenda for action for the environment includes strengthening research on the underlying causes of environmental degradation, addressing the relationship between population, poverty and the environment and the feasibility of appropriate policy interventions; working closely with borrowers; using environmental assessment methodology in preparing and

evaluating Bank-financed projects; increasing lending for environmental and population projects; training; international cooperation to develop policies on emerging environmental issues; and improving and increasing the flow of environmental information. Its priority environmental problem areas are: destruction of natural habitats; land degradation; degradation and depletion of freshwater resources; urban, industrial and agricultural pollution; and the degradation of the global commons. These are addressed through country-focused environmental action plans, country economic and sector analytical and advisory work, and lending for free-standing environmental projects and for incorporation of environmental components in development projects, for structural adjustment. The Bank's work builds on environmental profiles, strategy documents and sectoral and economic analyses undertaken by countries or other agencies. In the training programmes organized by the Bank's Economic Development Institute sectoral environmental management has received attention. The Bank's policy includes financing projects and policies that meet both economic and environmental criteria drawing on technological progress. It assists in international efforts to mobilize resources to implement environmental projects when concessionary finance is required and plans to give added emphasis to lending for population activities. As regards incorporation of environmental considerations in development projects, the Bank in September 1989 adopted an operational directive on environmental assessment.

35. Environmental coordination of development cooperation has increased. DAC facilitates the use of agreed environmental assessment recommendations and checklists and regular information exchange on policies and programmes in order to address environmental management responsibilities of development cooperation. Based on such reviews, for example, guidelines for effective country environmental reports have been drawn up and others are being prepared on assistance to deal with global environmental problems. These will form part of a policy package on environmentally relevant aspects of development by a DAC ministerial-level meeting in December in 1991. The Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment (CIDIE) continues to provide a forum for information exchange and annual thematic reviews of multilateral development institutions' environmental policies and programmes. CIDIE membership now includes 16 multilateral development institutions, including UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank and regional development banks and funds.

C. Action by the United Nations system

36. As environmental issues have come increasingly to the fore of individual development sectors, the organizations, organs and programmes of the United Nations system have established and strengthened policies, programmes and capacities to address them within the frameworks of their respective programme priorities. Pertinent information in this connection is reflected in the overview of United Nations system-wide activities relevant to General Assembly

resolution 44/228 (A/CONF.151/PC/6) prepared through the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters (DOEM), in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989. The report contains information on objectives, major ongoing activities, upcoming events, existing coordination mechanisms, activities that need to be accelerated and gaps to be filled in, and was submitted to the Governing Council of UNEP at its second special session and to the first session, held in August 1990, of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The present progress report should be read in conjunction with that overview.

1. Policies and programmes

37. At its fifteenth session, the Governing Council of UNEP took steps to make the Council a more effective and efficient mechanism to fulfil its key functions, namely, promoting international environmental cooperation and recommending policies to that end; providing general policy guidance for direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system; keeping under review the world environmental situation so as to bring to the attention of Governments emerging environmental problems of wide international significance; promoting international scientific contribution to environmental knowledge and information; and maintaining under continuing review the impact of national and international environmental policies and measures on developing countries, as well as the problem of additional costs that may be incurred by them in implementing environmental programmes and projects. It also urged Governments to establish UNEP national committees to enhance the flow of information and views between countries and UNEP.

38. The Governing Council called for concentration on major environmental programme areas, namely, combating climate change and global warming, depletion of the ozone layer and transboundary air pollution; protection of quality of freshwater; protection of oceans and coastal areas and resources; protection of land resources by combating deforestation and desertification; conservation of biological diversity; environmentally sound management of biotechnology; environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals; and protection of human health conditions and quality of life, especially the living and working environment of poor people.

39. The preventive as well as the ameliorative aspects of environmental management and application of the precautionary principle are reflected in UNEP activities. Collection, analysis and dissemination of scientific information and data in respect of major environmental problems have been accelerated and efforts to establish international consensus on the ways and means of addressing the problems have intensified. The coming into effect of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, its subsequent strengthening and the establishment of the ozone multilateral fund provide a concrete example of practical integration of environmental objectives in development and in international economic cooperation. Technical work and negotiations on climate change, biotechnology, hazardous wastes have similarly reflected a broad-based approach to environmental

management. In response to requests from Governments, UNEP, in collaboration with UNDP and concerned institutions, has also been providing assistance in respect of environmental legislation, institution-building, environmental assessment and management and their integration with development policy and planning.

40. UNEP participates in the strategic planning of the Global Environment Facility operations. It is helping ensure that the global policy framework for the Facility is consistent with existing conventions and related legal instruments and agreements and will help developing countries define their needs to deal with the global environmental issues supported by the Facility. It will disseminate information on existing and emerging technological developments, coordinate research and data-gathering, organize the establishment of the scientific and technical advisory panel to backstop the operations of the Facility, and, in collaboration with UNDP, will provide scientific and technological support needed for institution-building and training.

41. UNDP has strengthened its capacity to deal with environmental management and sustainable development, inter alia, by way of consolidation of the policy coordination and promotional role of the UNDP inter-programme environmental action team; and awareness-building for sustainable development at country and subregional levels through UNDP's special programme resources, the indicative planning figure and trust funds, establishment of sustainable development networks at the country level and convening of national workshops on environment and sustainable development. Environmental management guidelines are developed to provide a framework to guide UNDP staff in integrating the environmental dimension in country programming and project design.

42. For planning and accounting purposes, UNDP has expanded its definition of environmental projects, which, apart from including projects for environmentally sound and sustainable development, also include projects to improve the quality of human life through sustainable improvements in living conditions (e.g. public health and disease control projects), and sectoral projects with environmental components (e.g. pest management). In 1988, 24.2 per cent of all UNDP projects, accounting for a total value of $US 299 million, that is 24.1 per cent of the total value of all UNDP projects, were considered environmental. UNDP supported the work on the international conservation financing project, with the World Resources Institute, UNEP and others, and collaborates with the World Bank and UNEP in implementing the pilot phase of the Global Environment Facility. It plays the lead role in coordinating pre-investment studies and technical assistance and ensuring their consistency with each country's human resources development strategy and action plan. UNDP provides support for participation by the developing countries in the preparatory process of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including preparation of national reports on environment and sustainable development.

43. The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the interface between sustainable development and the work of UNCTAD (TD/B/1267) examines four main areas: commodities, trade policy, technology and development finance. Following consideration of the report, the Trade and Development Board decided that the sustainable development objective, particularly reduction of poverty, should be incorporated into all areas of UNCTAD work at the intergovernmental level, and the Committees, at their forthcoming sessions, should consider activities for sustainable development in the context of their respective work programmes. The United Nations University (UNU) human dimension of global change programme is a collaborative initiative with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Federation of Institutes of Advanced Studies (IFIAS) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC). It aims to improve scientific understanding of the dynamics governing human interactions with the total earth system, the study and strengthening of social strategies and policy options to deal with global environmental change, and promotes sustainable development. It supports workshops and publications, conferences and research undertakings encompassing diverse areas, for example, energy, tropical forests, climate, oceans, land use and management. Resolution 12/18 of the Commission of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements asked the Executive Director to link the policy directions of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 with the concept of sustainable development and stressed that integrated planning and management of human settlements can be a powerful instrument in achieving sustainable development.

44. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations completed a first study on transnational corporations and climate change, and also drafted criteria for sustainable development management. These criteria were widely distributed by the Centre and UNEP to transnational corporations and Governments. The Centre prepared a report on lessons learned in industrial environmental protection and on requirements for information disclosure on environmental hazards, a status report on the work being carried out in the United Nations system on hazardous technologies and safer alternatives to them, and proposals for a directory on such technologies and alternatives (E/C.10/1990/10). The United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development organized a conference on energy in climate and development, seminars on the desertification process in contiguous areas and on biotechnology for food production in dry areas, and workshops on clean coal technologies and on creative financing for environmentally sound development.

45. By 1990 the World Food Programme (WFP) was assisting developing countries with 155 projects with environmental components to a total value of $1.3 billion, that is, more than one third of WFP development assistance. WFP seeks to integrate environmental considerations in its assistance both at the farm level and in area development. WFP assistance is focused on poor areas where soils are depleted, erosion advanced, rainfall inadequate and access by road limited. Emphasis is placed on sound project design rather than formal environmental impact assessment, the objective being to incorporate environmental factors at all stages of the project cycle. The United Nations

Office of the Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reports increased efforts to integrate environmental concerns in disaster prevention and preparedness activities; the launching of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999) is expected to strengthen that effort.

46. The 77th session of the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution on environment, development, employment and the role of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as a Convention and Recommendations concerning safety in the use of chemicals at work. The ILO Governing Body examined the possibility of reviewing the prevention of industrial accidents in 1992 with a view to a possible adoption of a new international standard. ILO prepares codes of practice on major hazard control and implements in collaboration with UNEP environmental training to support employers' and workers' organizations' involvement in environmental improvement. Its working environment programme deals increasingly with the interrelationship between the working and the general environments.

47. The 25th Conference of FAO decided to intensify the Organization's interdisciplinary work: to ensure integration of environmental considerations into all relevant activities; to give higher priority to prevention of environmental degradation which affects agriculture, fisheries and forestry; and to strengthen its cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system. FAO has adopted an operational definition of sustainable development focusing on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and strengthened its capacity to deal with environment and sustainable development matters. Its Interdepartmental Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development and ad hoc groups and task forces address environmental matters in an interdisciplinary manner. In collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands, FAO will convene an international conference on agriculture and environment in April 1991 to address issues and perspectives of agricultural growth and sustainability; technological options and research requirements; strategies for sustainable agricultural development; and instruments and tools for implementation.

48. FAO has sought to unite those aspects of biodiversity conservation, development and utilization which relate to agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and has drafted elements for a convention on biological diversity. It provides advice, in collaboration with UNEP, UNESCO and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), to the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Biological Diversity. It participates in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with a focus on the possible impact of climate change on agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The FAO energy programme has advanced the design and application of integrated approaches to agricultural and rural development. Its Legal Office has been strengthened to coordinate work relating to conventions on forestry and biological diversity, and has launched a programme in pesticide law to secure adoption in national legislation of the principles of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides.

49. FAO's sixteenth Regional Conference for Africa endorsed a scheme for the conservation and rehabilitation of African lands. The tropical forestry action plan is now being implemented in 83 countries and has generated subregional cooperation with the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation, the Commission on Environment and Development of Central America and with the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD). FAO has initiated action to prepare a convention on the conservation and development of forests as a legal framework encompassing a range of environmental and developmental aspects. In addition, a common framework for world forest resource assessment is drafted and a review of debt-for-nature swaps is under way with the purpose of advancing its application in forestry. In fisheries, a proposal to establish a Group of Experts on Scientific Aspects of Marine Potential (GESAMP) working group and guidelines to assess environmental impacts of coastal aquaculture have been drawn up.

50. The UNESCO programme for environmentally sound and sustainable development includes intersectoral and inter-agency projects in environmental education and information, the international geological correlation project work on natural hazards, the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the international hydrological programme. Its social sciences programme plans to elaborate scenarios with long-term objectives for sustainable development. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Committee on Aviation Environment Protection is developing proposals for an amendment of annex 16 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation entitled "Environmental protection", involving, especially, limits on aircraft noise in the vicinity of airports.

51. The World Health Assembly adopted, in May 1989, the World Health Organization's (WHO) approach to sustainable development. It gave support to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and to continued and accelerated efforts to provide safe drinking-water and sanitation to all people. The Director-General of WHO has constituted a Commission on Health and Environment to guide the Organization's application of principles of sustainable development, and to bring the full implications of the relationship between health and the environment to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Governments of the WHO European region have adopted a charter on health and environment.

52. Activities of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) relating to sustainable development include the World Weather Watch, the World Climate Programme, hydrological and water resources activities, environmental pollution monitoring and research, and weather prediction and tropical meteorology research. The WMO programme on long-range transport of air pollutants, depletion of the ozone layer and climate change have played a key role. The WMO Executive Council authorized continuation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a joint WMO/UNEP body to support negotiation of a framework convention on climate change, to update assessments of scientific information periodically, to undertake analyses of various options, to evaluate special problems of developing countries and to ensure their active participation. WMO and UNEP convened an open-ended ad hoc

working group in September 1990 in preparation for a framework convention on climate change. The Second World Climate Conference was held in November 1990 at Geneva. Its Ministerial Declaration sets out elements of a global strategy and policy considerations for action, and makes recommendations for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change. WMO provides scientific assessments of the adequacy of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments, and participates in activities related to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. In cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Commission of the European Communities, it carries out studies to predict atmospheric and water transport and dispersion of radioactive and toxic chemical contamination from accidental releases. A global communication and prediction system for the latter is being organized. A system of coordinated international meteorological support to respond to marine pollution incidents is being developed, especially to predict movement of oil spills in high seas. WMO is preparing an international conference on water and the environment to be convened in London in January 1992.

53. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is examining the role of industrial intellectual property, particularly in regard to patents and licensing and technology transfer, in the context of promoting implementation of the Montreal Protocol. IAEA has published a Code of Practice on International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste. The Code requires that transboundary movement should only take place in accordance with internationally accepted safety standards and with prior notification and consent of the sending, receiving and transit States and in accordance with their respective laws and regulations. The Governing Council of IFAD considered at its thirteenth session an analysis and recommendations on operational issues on environmental sustainability and rural poverty alleviation.

54. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNEP convened the First African Regional Conference on Environment and Development at Kampala in June 1989. The Conference adopted an agenda for action that addressed key issues and priorities for immediate action, namely, the prevention and reversal of desertification, food self-sufficiency and food security, efficient and sustainable use of water resources, energy self-sufficiency, industrial pollution, maintenance of species and ecosystems, and management of demographic changes and pressures. ECA endorsed the agenda for action and will convene a regional conference at Cairo in April 1991 in preparation for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

55. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened a ministerial-level conference on environment and development in Asia and the Pacific in October 1990. It reviewed the state of the environment and promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region, regional cooperation on matters of environment and development, a regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development, and global environmental issues. The regional strategy was finalized at a meeting of government-designated experts and will be submitted to the Commission at its forty-seventh session.

56. A European regional conference was organized at Bergen, Norway, in May 1990 to review progress in implementing recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development and to identify initiatives of relevance to the region of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Its ministerial declaration includes recommendations relating to the environmental challenges facing ECE members, environmental awareness and public participation, sustainable industrial activity, sustainable energy use and economics of sustainability. The ECE programme gives priority to the environment and includes use of environmental impact assessment, economic instruments, linkages between environmental and trade policies, "Energy Efficiency 2000", environmentally sound technologies, energy-labelling systems and environmental improvement of transportation.

57. Conventions are under preparation in Europe on the transboundary impact of industrial accidents and on the protection and use of transboundary water courses and international lakes. Following the 1989 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, ratified by 31 ECE members and the European Community, the 1988 Sofia Protocol on the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides and their Transboundary Fluxes was to enter into force by the end of 1990. A new protocol on volatile organic compounds is under preparation as one of the measures to combat forest decline. A European convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context is to be ready for signature in the spring of 1991. The Commission adopted the ECE Charter on Ground-Water Management in 1989 and the Code of Conduct on Accidental Pollution of Transboundary Inland Waters in 1990. The Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation was opened for signature on 1 February 1990 and a comprehensive Declaration on the Conservation of Flora and Fauna was adopted in 1990.

58. ECLAC held a regional meeting of government experts on the environment and sustainable economic and social development in September 1990. In October 1990 a ministerial meeting, co-sponsored by UNEP, adopted an action plan that aims at strengthening the capacity for political decision-making and actions to streamline the regional cooperation system on the environment. Its strategic principles include encouraging subregional policies, plans, programmes and projects; supporting subregional agreements that will promote implementation of environmental and sustainable development projects; encouraging harmonization of environmental legislation and regulation; giving priority to preventive environmental protection; supporting training, education and awareness-building; and strengthening international technical and financial cooperation. The action plan sets out several priority programme areas for implementation, including environmental management, resources management, institutional development and pollution prevention and control.

2. Coordination

59. Inter-agency coordination on environment and sustainable development activities has increased at global, regional and national levels. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination dealt with environmental matters at

its regular 1989 and 1990 sessions. Numerous examples of inter-agency coordination relevant to General Assembly resolution 44/228 are contained in the overview of system-wide activities (A/CONF.151/PC/6). The system-wide medium-term environment programme continues to provide a flexible framework to plan and implement in a coordinated manner activities relating to environment and sustainable development.

60. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) has given particular attention to inter-agency coordination and collaboration in respect of climate change, conservation of biodiversity, conservation and development of forests and control of marine pollution, notably with regard to the development of international legal instruments. It encouraged its members to undertake activities to analyse issues of a cross-cutting nature and supported development of integrated economic-cum-environmental accounting, and studies on effects of environmental policies and regulations, on internalization of environmental costs in production and consumption, and on environmental aspects of structural adjustment programmes.

61. The Committee undertook a review of how members are providing for environmental assessment in their operational activities. The review's results were considered by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational activities) and the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters. While each organization needs to consider environmental aspects in the light of its own programme needs, there is much to be gained by exchange of information and experience and evolution of a unified framework of criteria and principles. In order to provide coordinated assistance to countries in integrating environmental considerations into the development process, an inter-agency steering committee was established and a methodology and procedure was agreed upon. The pilot project provides a mechanism and a consultative forum to bring to bear the specialized expertise of organizations and bodies of the United Nations system on planning for environmentally sound development focusing on countries' own priority environmental problems. In its resolution 44/229 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly asked the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the structure of the United Nations and its responsiveness in dealing with major environmental issues in order to strengthen its capacity to deal with these matters in an integrated, coherent and effective way. That report is in preparation.

D. International cooperation on global environmental concerns

1. Action to address major global environmental issues

62. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer entered into force on 22 September 1988 and 1 January 1989, respectively. So far, 73 countries and the European Economic Community (EEC) have become parties to the Convention and 67 countries and EEC have become parties to the Protocol. The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the First Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol designated UNEP as

the secretariat for the Convention and its Montreal Protocol. The Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol held in London in June 1990 adopted several far-reaching provisions and decisions, including: (a) the adjustments to the Protocol requiring parties to phase out the consumption of the five chlorofluorocarbons and three halons by the year 2000; (b) the Amendment to the Protocol requiring, inter alia, parties to phase out the consumption of 10 other chlorofluorocarbons and carbon tetrachloride by the year 2000 and to phase out the consumption of methyl chloroform by the year 2005; (c) a strengthened provision for expeditious transfer of best available, environmentally safe substitutes and related technologies to the parties that are operating under paragraph 1 of article 5 and that the transfers occur under fair and most favourable conditions; (d) establishment of a financial mechanism to facilitate the transfer of technology, including a multilateral fund as well as other multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation, and an executive committee to administer and control the fund; (e) a resolution setting out guidelines on the use of transitional substances such as hydrochlorofluorocarbons; (f) the procedure and institutional mechanism for determining non-compliance with the provisions of the Protocol and for treatment of the parties found to be in non-compliance; and (g) a decision to reconvene the assessment panels to compile into supplementary reports any new information on the scientific, environmental, economic and technical information acquired since the completion of the first assessment process in August 1989.

63. The Amendment to the Montreal Protocol will enter into force on 1 January 1992, provided 20 countries ratify it. The Interim Multilateral Ozone Fund came into operation on 1 January 1991 for a period of three years. The Fund will support activities including projects to assist eligible developing countries to comply with the Montreal Protocol, especially projects related to conversion from using ozone-depleting substances to environmentally acceptable substitutes and related technologies. The secretariat for the Fund is established at Montreal, Canada. An agreement among the implementing agencies of the Fund, namely, the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, encompasses their cooperation with the intergovernmental executive committee.

64. In August 1990 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change adopted its first assessment report and the reports of Working Group I (Science), Working Group II (Impacts) and Working Group III (Response strategies). Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/212 of 21 December 1990, the Panel will provide technical and scientific assistance in response to requests of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Second World Climate Conference in November 1990 noted, inter alia, that, notwithstanding scientific uncertainties, nations should now take steps towards reducing sources and increasing sinks of greenhouse gases through national and regional actions. It stressed that a first step was to stabilize emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled under the Montreal Protocol and called for negotiations, without delay, on a framework convention containing appropriate commitments and any related instruments. It recognized the special situation and needs of the developing countries and agreed that consideration be given to funding facilities, including the Global Environment

Facility, a clearing-house mechanism, and a new possible international fund for adequate, additional and timely financial resources, and institutional arrangements for the developing countries.

65. The General Assembly in its resolution 45/212 of 21 December 1990 decided to establish a single intergovernmental negotiating process under its auspices, supported by UNEP and WMO for the preparation by an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of an effective framework convention on climate change, and also decided to establish a voluntary fund to support participation of the developing countries in the negotiation process. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee met in its first session in February 1991 and established two Working Groups to assist it: Working Group I to deal with appropriate commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, additional financial resources to enable developing countries to fulfil their obligations under the convention, and technology transfer and special needs of developing countries; and Working Group II to deal with legal and institutional mechanisms to prepare the framework convention. The Committee adopted guidelines for the negotiations and for organizing the Working Groups, and procedures for holding meetings and for drafting the convention.

66. Pursuant to decisions 15/34 (1989) and II/5 (1990) of the Governing Council of UNEP, three sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity and one session of the Sub-Working Group on Biotechnology were held. Subsequently, two sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Biological Diversity were held. These meetings resulted in agreed elements to be contained in a convention on biological diversity and a draft convention on biological diversity prepared by the UNEP secretariat at the request of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts. The second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts held in March 1991 adopted its rules of procedure, elected its Bureau and decided to establish two sub-working groups. The first sub-working group will address fundamental principles, general obligations, measures of in situ and ex situ conservation, and relationship with other legal instruments, and financial aspects of such measures. Sub-Working Group II will address access to biodiversity and related technologies, including biotechnology, technology transfer, technical assistance, financial mechanisms and international cooperation.

67. As at January 1991, 52 States and the European Community had signed the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which was adopted in March 1989. The interim secretariat for the Basel Convention commenced its activities in November 1989, focusing on the implementation of resolutions adopted by the conference of plenipotentiaries held at Basel, including the development of a protocol on liability and compensation. The Governing Council of UNEP called upon all States to sign and ratify the Convention and to strengthen their cooperation in problem areas within its scope. It also considered that a comprehensive approach to hazardous wastes was needed in order to minimize or eliminate the generation of hazardous wastes, and brought this to the attention of the

Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The second meeting of the Committee will consider environmentally sound management of wastes. The Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Compensation met in March 1991 in a second meeting to address issues of international liability and compensation, the procedures for enforcement and mechanisms and procedures for such compensation, with a view to developing a comprehensive set of elements that might be included in a protocol to the Basel Convention. So far the Convention has received 10 ratifications; it needs 20 in order to come into effect. In January 1991 the Governments of the States members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the Bamako Convention, an African agreement that runs parallel to the Basel Convention, indicating that the political will to address the problems on transboundary movements of hazardous waste and their disposal is growing.

68. In May 1989 the Governing Council of UNEP adopted the amended London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade, which incorporates the prior informed consent procedure. All exporting countries are expected to participate in the procedure. The FAO Conference adopted the incorporation of the procedure into the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides in November 1989. FAO and UNEP have established a joint panel to assist Governments in the implementation of the prior informed consent procedure for chemicals.

2. Mobilization of new and additional finance

69. In November 1990 25 developed and developing countries agreed to establish the Global Environment Facility to be implemented jointly by the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP. The Facility provides concessional funding for investment projects and related activities in slowing down global warming through energy conservation, use of renewable energy sources, forest management and reforestation; conservation of biological diversity; protection of international waters, including marine environment, against transboundary pollution, and controlling depletion of the ozone layer by way of transition from production and use of chlorofluorocarbons, halons and other harmful gases to appropriate substitutes. The pilot phase of the programme will extend over three years from 1 January 1991 and will be of the order of at least SDR 1 billion. The interim multilateral fund relating to the Montreal Protocol is initially of the order of $160 million.

III. CONCLUSION

70. The preceding paragraphs highlight key features of progress made at various levels in implementing General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187. An outstanding feature is the high political profile of environmental issues and upsurge in awareness-raising and consensus-building on the environmental priorities and their relationship to development. Correspondingly, commitment at the policy level by Governments and

organizations and various approaches to translate that commitment into needed procedures, methods, institutional arrangements, finance, training, technical cooperation and other instruments have gradually appeared. While the challenge of environmentally sound and sustainable development is recognized widely, experience in dealing effectively with it is still in a formative stage. Yet in the case of a few countries and institutions that have reported on this matter to the United Nations, that experience appears to hold great promise. A review and analysis of such experience will be included in the consolidated report on the subject requested by the General Assembly to be submitted to it at its forty-seventh session.